

WE WANT OUR PEOPLE TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES — GARVEY

ABENG

Vol. 1 No. 10 April 5, 1969

PRICE 6d

FOR DENIS

WHO WAS A DRUM

What can we do
But hold
Hope
in this agony.

In this waiting silence
this tight beginning
this restructure
restructuring
new pain
for another generation
of birth
of dying.

What but Love
and to love is a violence.

Love is a violent understanding.

You heard —
the drum,
searching,
inside,
your void
and your birthright of terror —
and you named the names
of love, involvement, of commitment
from the chaos.

You, shaped love
with both hands
black, and white
a violent love of understanding.

Agony
of a torn spirit
restructuring
searching
and always the quick shy laughter
the gaiety of being
the explosion of angered loving.

You chose
you chose
you chose
the drum-sound
Love, to be a drum,
and love, is a violent dying.

With a mouth
uncertain
in its beginnings
its trembling certainty,
a mouth that stamped you man
in this three-fingered world
a mouth that stamped you black
in the divisions
in the shattered concepts of your
accident of birth,
you chose
Love
and hope
from the grey schizoid murder.

"I have left love
a white woman understanding,
my wife, my woman
A curly-headed mite-like elfin child.
Will THEY find hope?
Love
In this three-fingered existence.
I have left
Pain
and the uncertainties,
the certain tendrils
of men, capable of loving.
Walk Good —
In peace, In Love
In the drum track of Hope."

Marina.



THERE IS NO
TURNING BACK.

But my people
know
that the hot
day will be over
soon
that the star
that dies
the flamboyant car-
cass that rots
in the road
in the gutter
will rise
rise
rise
in the butter-
flies of a new
and another
morning.
that whip rope
lash, brave boast
and shout
will dry
dry
dry
like the bare
bones: powder-
ing spirit-
less stones
of this cold
and alien morning

...Rain drips
from the trees
in the dawn
in the morn-
ing, bird
calls, green
opens a crack.
Should you
Shatter the door
and walk
in the morning
fully aware
of the future to come?

E.L. Brathwaite
from Epilogue of Rights of Passage

Denis Sloly

Remember This Brother

... AS I KNEW HIM

Certain questions naturally arose in our marriage. I am white. Denis was nearly white. Our daughter is blond and blue eyed. Yet Denis worked for Abeng, and I helped him.

The other night at an Abeng Assembly, Denis got up to speak and voices said, "Who is he to call us Brothers and Sisters?" Other voices said "Is not white or black, is white minded or black minded."

This is one answer, but there are other less comforting answers which Denis had to face. Suppose it turned out to be actually whether you are white (even brown) or black. Suppose the Jamaican black people, angry at substantial white ownership of a substantially black society, rejected this ownership as being yet another manifestation of white racism and answered with black racism, what then? Would Denis withdraw from such a movement since after all, when the day came, his neck would get chopped along with mine? No, he would not withdraw. He felt that there's a stage people have to go through. If the stage includes a black racism to answer white racism then that's the way it has to be. He always said there are two things anyone can do in this situation suppress blacks by force, like during the Paul Bogle rebellion, that is, submerge their hate with fear. This will last for some time, then there will be a resurgence of hate. If you feel brutal suppression is unjust, then whatever colour you are you must look for another answer which includes bringing the reality of hate into the open, airing the issues and proceeding from there. If push come to shove and it needed black racism to release the energy that would purge white racism then he wouldn't shrink. And if that involved losing his own head because he looked white then he wouldn't shrink either. The thing that he felt must come at any cost was radical change. If black racism was the only way to change, then so be it; he would have to walk that road.

At the same time he worked until four o'clock every morning for Abeng, because he felt that it was the best hope for averting chaos. Many middle class men in Jamaica know that something urgent has to be done, but the solutions they usually support are compromise solutions that are not effective. They play ball with this or that vested interest and this qualifies their commitment, waters it down so that the solutions proposed are not solutions. They have this or that marginal effect but change nothing central. Denis was absolutely committed. He was aware that Abeng sometimes sounded racist, but felt that this reflected a mood in the country, and that this mood had to be expressed and directed towards larger more relevant ends—the liberation of a black country from white power. He was not a racist, but was impatient with the man who would see black racism and be blind to the white racism that provoked it. The words 'black' and 'white' kept coming up with him because he rejected the argument that the ownership pattern in Jamaica had nothing to do with colour. By and

large, big money in this country — bauxite, tourism, sugar, banking, insurance — is owned by expatriates and local whites.

But apart from all historical considerations, Denis felt that in a world where colour is an important factor, white ownership of a black society is ludicrous and psychologically damaging. It results in an inferiority that can only be changed by ownership. They must be owners, not merely overseers. However in the 20th Century it is in practice impossible for black individuals or groups to find the money to take over bauxite, sugar, or tourism, so this must be done by the country as a whole, and to do this the anti-black psychology which teaches that anything blacks touch will crash must be destroyed.

This is the destructive/constructive task that Abeng has set itself. Denis felt that this paper could become an important force in Jamaica, uniting all men in pursuit of black emancipation.

But there are of course penalties in working for Abeng, and in our society you have to think twice before blowing this particular horn. Probably the central question that people like Denis face, is the conflict of fear (plus family loyalty) and conscience. The feeling of many middle class people is that they are not oppressed, and it's the people who are oppressed who must fight. Denis rejected this. He felt no fear and committed his life.

Other problems, of course, then arise. You face, for example, the need to do your job as a Lawyer, as well as your job for your country, and the only answer is to work day and night. Denis went to work every day, then did work for the Jamaica Council for Human Rights and made whatever trips were necessary to the Abeng office, to deal with a hundred-and-one things—the finances, the cartoons, the weekly press of deadlines, delivering the paper. What happened in fact was that he was working until four o'clock in the morning, and it made him irritable, and often hard to live with. If you told him no man could keep on at this pitch, he'd say that if Abeng failed, the chance it is giving Jamaica wouldn't come again in fifteen or twenty years.

What chance is it giving Jamaica? Some people say it distorts news, gives it a racial slant. There was that picture of a black man carrying a fat white tourist on his shoulder. Wasn't this running down tourism which provides us with a livelihood? Denis argued that Abeng isn't against a tourist industry, but such an industry should not be run in a manner which involves degradation.

It was not Denis' belief, or Abeng's belief, that there should be a racist revolution. (This might simply end up in a black dictator acting as overseer to invisible white interests.) Abeng, by reflecting and defining black anger, is more likely to heal than to harm. If this anger is not expressed, not defined, not explained—this is the real danger. And he worked against it every hour of his life.

CHERRY

... AS A LAWYER

Denis Stoly, the Lawyer, had a deliberate and emphatic way of speaking, but when he spoke he left no doubt about what he was saying. His manner of speaking characterised the thoroughness and energy he brought to his work, his passion for details and his anxiety to get to the substance of the problems which confronted him.

When Denis began his practice as a Barrister in Jamaica he occupied the room next to mine and I got to understand his perception of the function of the Law in a society such as ours is. He was one of the few practising Lawyers who accepted the notion that a lawyer's responsibilities were not merely to his clients but that he owed a larger obligation to the society as a whole. He understood and accepted that part of his responsibility was to pursue justice, equality and dignity for all human beings and it was his acceptance of this responsibility which guided his work as a founding member and Secretary of the Jamaica Council for Human Rights.

But Denis came to understand the limitations of the Law in the pursuit of justice and it was this understanding of the difference between legal and social justice that deepened his interest in politics. Indeed it was only the day before he died that we discussed together the extent to which the ideals and moral values of the Law are being violated.

If he had lived he would have continued to work for a more just and human social and legal order. The legal profession will miss him for his fearlessness in all the task he undertook and in particular the defence of the poor and dispossessed. He will be missed for his thoroughness, determination and the cheerfulness of his relationship with his colleagues. We will long remember his sincerity and integrity.

The young man with that lively bounce in his walk and that large canvas bag full of papers and files made his mark on the practice of Law in Jamaica.

HUGH SMALL

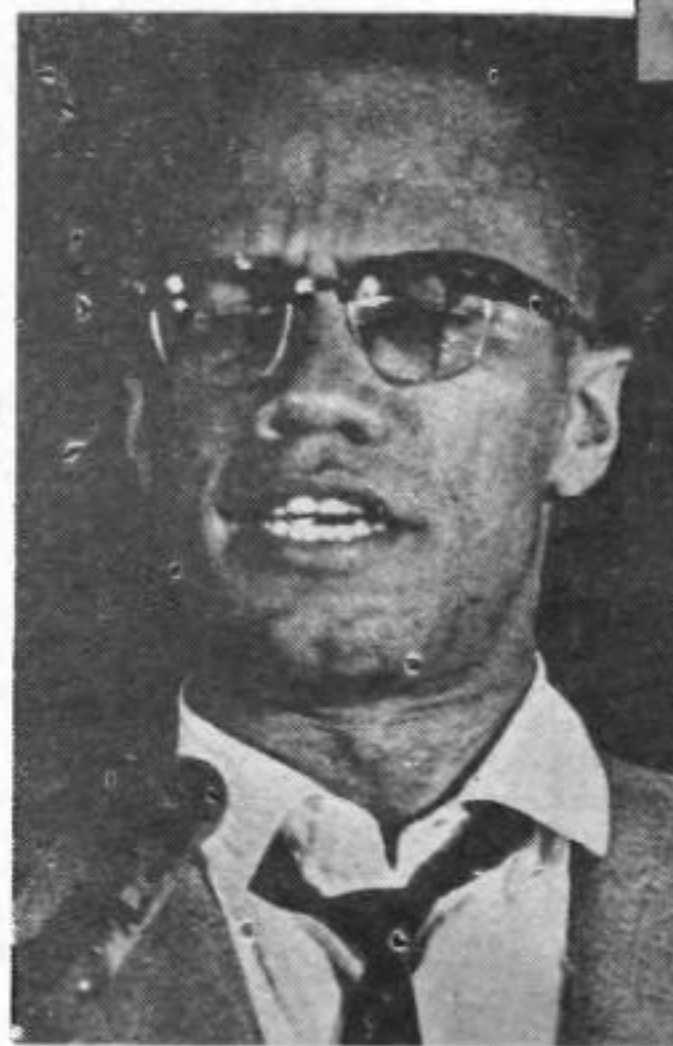
TO ABENG SUNDAY
March 30, 1969.

Profound shock at our loss of Denis STOP You all know how extremely dedicated he was to the struggle to return our country from the hands of foreign white capitalists to ownership and control by our own people STOP In my view he was one of the most dedicated of our generation of men to that cause to undo the sell out of our country by past and passing generations of our political leaders STOP The movement can hardly afford to lose one with such sheer brilliance and capacity for hard work STOP Pass regrets to Cherry I feel sure she is capable of withstanding this terrible blow STOP Will return soon.
GEORGE BECKFORD
Port of Spain, Trinidad

... AS A BROTHER

The death of one of our brothers on Sunday has created a setback for the working class people of Jamaica for the struggle against the ruling class system. I, being a poor black youth, see the work that Brother Denis Stoly was doing had very great importance—a man who had become an advocate for the poorer class of people in Jamaica, who are mostly black. When you can find one from among the privileged with that amount of love for the oppressed has departed from us it is a very sad news for the Freedom Fighters of Jamaica.

BONGO NEVILLE



"... And if you knew him you would know why we must honour him; Malcolm was our manhood, our living, black manhood! This was his meaning to his people. And, in honouring him, we honour the best in ourselves. ... And we will know him then for what he was and is — a Prince — our own black shining Prince! — who didn't hesitate to die, because he loved us so."

OSSIE DAVIS
Funeral Eulogy



"This was Fanon: a man of thought and a man of action. A man of action and a man of faith, one who transcended at once, like an impetuous rush forward, the antinomies of the modern world in which so many are engulfed. There are lives which constitute appeals to live. ..."

AIME CESAIRE



"I remember with passion more love was unique the most functions for the people"



"... lift up with the people who to victory"



"For no one knows Africa a certain tendency, dangerous sure never to forget"

Funeral
for the late
Shooter's
Thurs. 3rd April

... AS A FIGHTER FOR RIGHTS

THE BATTLE

On Sunday morning at about 9:30 my telephone rang. It was Denis Sloly. "I don't suppose I need to remind you of the meeting this morning?" he asked. I told him no and we arranged to meet at the Extramural Centre at 10:15 for the meeting which was scheduled for 10:30.

I arrived at the Centre about 3 minutes before Denis and was still in my car when he drove up. "Why have you removed your Abeng sticker?" he enquired. (The sticker on my left rear window had been torn off by my young son.) I knew why he asked the question and explained how it came to be removed, at the same time pointing out that the sticker on the right window was still intact.

We went into the Centre, Denis, Cherrie, his wife, and I. He left to collect some papers at his office. It was then that it happened.

Denis Sloly was first and last, a truly decent human being. A sensitive, compassionate person, he was deeply moved by human suffering and angered by man's injustice to man. He was one of the main organisers on the Steering Committee which planned and established the Jamaica Council for Human Rights and, in December 1967 when the Council was launched after 3 months of preparation, Denis accepted the onerous position of Secretary. Immediately he flung himself into the task with the zeal and sincerity that can only be appreciated by those of us who have had the privilege to work with him.

He was the very heart of the organisation and it is to his untiring and dedicated work that the Council has managed to grow and thrive. With a meticulous eye for organisational detail and a severe self-discipline Denis Sloly performed, often single-handedly, the tedious but essential tasks of preparing notices of meetings, contacting members, handling correspondence, drafting stencilling and circulating minutes etc. Along with this and a growing practice at the Bar,

Sloly was involved in the work of each of the four sub-committees of the Council, including the drafting of statements, fund-raising and investigating and receiving reports of individual cases of infringements of Human Rights.

His energy seemed inexhaustible and he was never too burdened or busy to tackle some new task or assume additional responsibility.

It would be a mistake to conclude, however, that Denis Sloly's contribution to Human Rights in Jamaica was in any way tied to the energy and efficiency with which he carried out his functions as Secretary of the Council for Human Rights. His real contribution in my view, was in the sort of person he was and the things he stood for. Denis was one of those rare persons for whom there were no social or racial barriers.

Born in privileged circumstances he moved as freely and uninhibitedly with his black brothers and 'sufferer' friends as with his privileged friends and acquaintances. It was impossible to pin on Sloly any sort of ideological label. The source of his commitment was his profound involvement in mankind and his respect for the individual person. His sincerity was immediately and instinctively recognised by sufferers and privileged alike.

Denis was accepted as a brother by all the black sufferers who knew him and by this fact demonstrated that social barriers only exist for those who make them. Equally significant he demonstrated that the racial prejudices which exist in this country are the creation of the white and light-skinned privileged classes. The realization of this fact deepened and re-enforced Denis' commitment to the task of creating a just and equal social order.

His life, so tragically short, enriched the lives of all it touched. His death creates a void that will not easily be filled; but filled it must be by those of us who are committed to the same ideals.

DENNIS DALY

The struggle against Colonialism is nothing if not comprehensive. There are no clearly marked lines of battle. It is as much a struggle against organized repressive violence, organized exploitation, the organized creation of mental disorders, as it is against organized neglect. The brother who internalizes his problem into an ulcer of his entrails, the sister who suffers a miscarriage because of poor pre-natal care, the accident which occurs because clear white lines are not drawn, and corners remain blind, are the daily anguish of the sufferers. In the struggle of liberation the neglect of people is as much the enemy as anything else. Thus it must be that the scream of the nightmare, the hunger pang, the zing of the machete merge with the staccato chorus of the machine gun and the punctuating boom of Imperialism's cannon.

The battle is everywhere. When a brother dies in his land at a time when foreign troops, foreign bases and foreign capitalists are there - he has not died in a tourist's paradise. (Come to Jamaica and see the natives!). The crunch of steel, the scream of tyres and the smell of burning rubber herald a sacrifice to organized neglect. And if this does not lift the level of consciousness then the sacrifice would have been in vain! The brother would not have passed on his weapons of struggle.

C.Y. THOMAS

... AS A MAN OF FAITH

Denis Sloly was a "white man" from St. Andrew who found his way into activity through which he could ground with black people in Jamaica. The ABENG newspaper was the bridge which made this possible. Like so many other St. Andrew people who have attended privileged schools and Universities which teach racialism, he was at first genuinely afraid of the blacks and was aware of the social explosion presently taking place.

On Wednesday night, March 26, an ABENG Assembly was held to discuss the paper. Rastafarians, youth, some of whom would face "Judge Dread" in court the next day, had come. They had developed a very keen sense of security from their everyday experience and knew when a man was with them, whether he was a security man or a policeman in plain clothes; and the reaction to any discovery of this nature was violent. They shouted at a black man whom they recognized as a security agent to get out.

This has a lot to do with Sloly. He is seen in this society as a Jamaica white man, yet he was very intimately involved with a black man's newspaper. The night of the ABENG Assembly at the Extramural Centre Sloly got up to talk before an audience which could wreck him if they ever misunderstood what he was contributing to this new experience. When Sloly was introduced one felt many people saying, "look how red man capture everything." He had expected this. Nevertheless he wouldn't apologize for it but got up and addressed the brothers and sisters as "brothers and sisters" and there was a ripple of

ridicule at this Jamaica white man calling them brothers and sisters. He went on to tell them about a most important aspect of the newspaper, that of distribution. By the activity he was engaged in and his public identification with it he was accepted on faith by the black brothers and sisters. This, too, was his own faith, faith in all black mankind.

RUPERT LEWIS

"I find myself suddenly in a world in which things do evil; a world in which I am summoned into battle; a world in which it is always a question of annihilation or triumph ... I find myself suddenly in the world and I recognize that I have one right alone: That of demanding human behaviour from the other ..."

... My final prayer:
O my body, make of me always a man who questions!
FRANTZ FANON



... AS A MAN OF HOPE

Sloly was a St. Andrew man who did and proved the possibility of turning toward the creativity that the forces of suffering can produce.

He did not explain away suffering to himself and set his sights on Stony Hill. In his activity he saw that though powerful forces maintained oppression, in the final analysis these conditions were man-made and therefore subject to reversal by human determination. And quite apart from his sensitivity to suffering this was what distinguished Sloly from his class and even from his colleagues in Abeng - his understanding that human determination expressed in minute attention to organizational detail - not consciousness nor commitments alone - could move the society forward.

Even to build a small paper meant the performance of several tasks by a few men. This would mean that some men would be called upon to do things they did not particularly like doing. It also meant that though each man had a task, this division of labour had to be an aid and not a brake on efficiency. So that if for some reason a man did not do his particular job you might have to help, not neglect him.

So that he was in charge of raising money. He did not like this task. Yet because of his performance, Abeng is now a force in Jamaica. At the same time he told men what the Law was and what could and could not go in the paper. This too was not pleasant for he recognised that sometimes telling the truth was in the last analysis more important than breaking the Law. But not at this stage - the main thing was for the paper to survive against enemies who looked for every opportunity to strike it down. The same man emptied office waste after our meetings and sought out his brothers to discuss politics and the place of an individual such as himself in a paper which must sink its roots among the black masses - but as an organization man he set the pace for the brothers. He held the line in his own boisterous well-meaning way against complacency. It was not enough to decide generally that a thing must be done. Who would do it? When? How? Are you sure?

These were Sloly's questions. The man proved that though social conditions make men, it is possible for men to break away - to behave in a way which must inevitably master social conditions.

TREVOR MUNROE

is a man who was blessed with energy, silly like many of us, most of us. His integrity his devotion to his work rebuke to those whose to carp, complain and wait for better times."

GEORGE LAMMING



moments of remembrance let us with optimism in the future, optimism in the final victory of say to Che and to the heroes who died with him: Even onward

FIDEL



of the next Lumumba. There is in presented by certain men. It is this racialism, which is at issue. Let us be

FRANTZ FANON

Service
Denis Sloly
Crematorium

1969 at 4.00 p.

ABENG

Vol. 1 No. 10 April 5, 1969

EDITORIAL
COMMITTEE
george beckford
robert hill
trevor munroe
rupert lewis

Marcus Garvey

OUR EASTER

"From a long period of little or no activity we arise again with determination to place ourselves in politics and commerce, in arts and science. We want our people to think for themselves. JUST HERE WE MUST BEGIN. Nobody can do our thinking for us. Other peoples think for us and WE WORK FOR THEM. WE ARE EXPLOITED. This must cease. Let us pause and assimilate this. Let us think for ourselves and work for ourselves. In no other way can we be self-respecting and respected. This attitude does not deny the rights and privileges of others, it only claims our own. We naturally want to HAVE things but we must BE before we can have. We hope, then, to be worthy and so to have and to enjoy liberty and luxuries equally with other peoples. We bear no enmity but brook no interference in working out a policy which is found good enough for other peoples and groups.

"A new day has arrived for our people in Jamaica, in the West Indies, in West Africa, in every place where we dwell by ourselves or with other communities. No longer do we mourn in sorrow, the grave is empty and we have arisen to a new life. Forgetting things behind, one thing we do, we press forward to our place of honour and dignity among the nations regardless of what others think.

"Let Easter impress our people with hope, faith, triumph and victory. Let us go forward to our resurrection glory — more education, more knowledge, more money, more wealth, more refinement. Laying aside the grave-clothes of ignorance, indolence, superstition and cringing fear let us arise into the new life to which we are called. OUR EASTER HAS COME.

*"The Blackman"
Saturday, March 30, 1929 — Easter*

"We have FOUND OURSELVES at last, and at last have decided to be masters of our fate; and our fate shall lead nowhere but to Africa's Redemption and an Emancipated Race."

Sunday, March 24, 1929



HIS LAST ROUTE REPORT

(Names and addresses given in the original report have been omitted.)

To: ABENG Distribution Committee
Report re MoBay Distribution Issue No. 8 21/3/69

400 copies taken - 222 distributed, 178 returned.

Names and addresses of contacts given by Committee all followed up. Contact made with the following:-

1. D.R. (for address and information about how to find house see chart).

A good contact — young, intelligent seems committed and willing to do a lot of work. Informs me that he has formed a "group". Gave him names and addresses of other distribution contacts in MoBay and asked him to cooperate with them. Also gave him R's address and 'phone number and D. Sloly's address and 'phone number.

He is expecting more copies next week and if none arrive by Saturday he will start phoning Kingston!

Virtually no feed back because he had seen only about 2 of the previous issues. Gave him 1 copy of each because of extraordinary interest and enthusiasm shown.

Gave him 30 copies only of No. 8 (quantity suggested by him.)
2 A.B. (o/c C). Proprietor of a shop at "Y" Street.

"Y" Street starts at North Gully. First part is recognizable part of city — sizeable buildings on both sides — Market place or Taxi stand or Bus Terminus in middle (didn't observe closely). C.B. lives on an extension of this which is hardly deserving of the name. Street is in fact a reasonably wide gutter with shacks on either side — a very depressing slum a stone's throw from the heart of MoBay's tourist shopping centres.

Young men in area — (many wearing black power necklaces) all seemed tough, bitter, angry — only ceased to be hostile when discovered we distributing Abeng. One of boys offered to be our distributor in a.c. called "Don" — I told him to take some from B.

B. has only decent building in area. 2 storeys — shop (grocery) at bottom also mattress making business.

He returned 88 copies of Issue No. 1 and 98 copies of Issue No. 2. He was very vague about it but seems to have been given 200 of each Issue and sold virtually none — the extra 100 of each Issue were sent to "Don" (he says) and he doesn't believe that more than 8 or so have been sold up there.

Part of his feeble explanation for this was that he had been given no information about commission (or anything definite) and therefore did not feel he could ask the young men to sell it.

I told him to take 25% commission and gave him 30 copies of Issue No. 8 and told him not to return any unsold. B didn't want back copies at all. He is expecting someone next week.

3. "L.M."

Introduced to Abeng by me. Very keen. Entertainer by profession therefore works at nights and has much time during day.

"R.S." is in his group. "M" took only 10 copies (quantity suggested by me) Issue No. 8. Showed so much interest I gave him a copy of each of the previous issues.

4. N.P., L.P.

No contact made with either but left 150 copies at home. Middle-class house — friends of R. Also left 1 copy of each of the previous Issues.

Contact made with N's wife — left her with list of names and addresses of other distribution contacts in MoBay and asked her to tell "N" to make contact with them.

If all else fails, copies can be sent to "L" each week by plane early Friday morning and "N" or "L" can pass on to other distributors, collect money and send to us by Registered post along with a written report. N's house hard to find. I had to get coude map from L's friend at airport. Can only remember that it is a new house overlooking the Housing Scheme. Am also told that house is near Radio or TV relay station — if that is any help. I believe if you follow the main road and then go towards the Housing Scheme but keep left instead of turning into the Scheme you will come to the house. It is one of two built close together and is on a hill side — houses lower than road.

5. S.T.

Student — given copies of Issues 3 & 4 by "Scree" and of Issues 1, 2, 5 and 6 by me. None of No. 8 left when he came.

Contact made at Abeng office in Kingston.

Gave him names and addresses of other MoBay contacts — and told him to cooperate with them.

He is now on vacation and will be coming into Kingston each week. For the time being he can do the MoBay route IF he proves reliable and IF it can be arranged. He seemed reluctant to give me his MoBay address — just said he would be back next week and could be contacted at...

No contact made with L.C. — S.T. tells me "C" lives at... in MoBay. "C" I discovered, now works with... but was not there when I went. I told them to tell him I had called about "ABENG" — they knew the name! Didn't think wise to leave copies there.

My cousin "M", who took me around to all these places has offered to help show the distribution man how to find them next week. "M" works with... in MoBay. He is not exactly "committed" (in fact called the paper "stupid" and gave out very reactionary sounds) but after we had finished making the rounds he asked for a copy of each of the back issues. He seems to know almost everyone in MoBay...

He seems willing to help. I leave it to the distribution men to decide whether to follow it up.

K.L. X Street — not found. Address unknown.

SLOLY



RAS NEGUS ON BROTHER DENIS

We know that he is black but some of us do not believe so. They do not think because he has come from the oppressive society that he would be able to shoulder the responsibility of playing an important part in the struggle. However I personally believe that those calculations are wrong but one could not say that a sufferer who speaks a style against these individuals should never do so. They should only study to find the reasons why they speak like that.

If they take it into consideration and try to find the reason, the persons who also have been criticised would have to give and take with the individual who has carried out these jeerings.

On the other hand the system of slavery, colonialism, and now neo-colonialism are three of the same kind of system which really oppress the people and keep them in that degraded condition.

So even if one has come from the oppressor class and is willing to offer any form of assistance, for the sufferers at that time may not have the necessary ability, we have to take into consideration the building of the struggle.

Now that Brother Sloly has met in such a tragedy from the suffering ranks who come to criticise, there is not one who can come to fulfil his duty and this is what is important. The man who can fulfil his duty you have to give him a chance. And the chance to give him is to keenly observe his activity.